

The XR2's 2005 season [so far]

With the first member of the new pit crew arriving in April (Marcus Daniel, 7lb 0oz) the plan at the start of 2005 was to have a quieter year than 2004, so we could get 'in to a routine' etc. "Everything will change" was the advice, and 3 months on I can't see what all the fuss was about. Maybe we're just lucky at the moment, but he's already sleeping through the night, and is fascinated by all things Motorsport on the tellybox, so the early signs are encouraging.

Over the winter I found the cause of the vibration that caused my retirement from Loton in September and spoilt any chances of retaining my Midland Speed Sports Libre title in 2004. It was a broken tie bar on the front suspension, and I dread to think the damage I'd have suffered if it had let go on a timed run at Loton. With the suspension on the car, there was no sign of even a crack, but as soon as I took it off, the suspension relaxed and the damage was plain to see.

In January 05 I had the final drive ratio raised by Quaife, to increase the maximum speed from 110 to 135MPH (and in testing I reached 125MPH when I ran out of runway at Bruntingthorpe so with a bit more effort I'm sure 130+ is achievable). To help increase the performance of the car, I've replaced the two rear silencers with a single Walker Dynomax Ultraflo back box ordered from www.summitracing.com in the USA. The box flows 711cfm, which is more than enough for my 180BHP (you should be using silencers that flow 2.2cfm/bhp for optimum performance). Summit don't appear to charge for postage, even from the USA, so they're a lot cheaper than even Demon Tweaks can manage, and the stock is a lot more varied. If you have www access, I'd highly



recommend giving them a visit. Another great site is www.jegs.com, whose exhaust brackets I used to bolt my new system together with. The brackets are stainless, and around a tenner each and so far have kept everything together. Not seen anything remotely the same in the UK before. I've also fitted an Under Drive Pulley to the Zetec crankshaft. It's a lightweight aluminium pulley, which replaces the stock damper. As its 25% smaller diameter than the stock item, it means that the water pump and alternator run slower, and this in turn saves a few valuable BHP at high revs. It also weighs a lot less than standard, so I shaved more weight off of the car.

During 2004 I had new personal bests at all venues, and at the very least I was hoping to achieve the same this year.

Curborough June 5th 2005

Two quick practice runs proved that fewer gear changes from the higher final drive, was going to save me time this year, and although harder to launch (the car will do 48mph in 1st) all the signs were encouraging.

After Molehill I could reach the final bend without running out of revs like last year, and I knew a new PB was on the cards. However on the first timed run before lunch, when I braked for the Molehill, there was a loud bang, and although the steering wheel was no longer straight I pressed on and still knocked 2/100ths off my PB. Returning to the pits I found the problem, which was the partial collapse of the front suspension, due to the loss of a 30mm circlip. As I had no spares I had to load up and go home. Shame as most competitors had 5 timed runs due to the low turn out. Its all well and good having custom made suspension, but that's now 3 events I've suffered failures at, and if bad luck runs in threes, I can now look forward to better reliability.

Aintree June 25th 2005

Last years event was ruined by torrential rain in the morning, and this year I was on the Michelins, so if it stayed dry, I was expecting to go quicker anyway. The weather stayed overcast for most of the day, with a nice cool breeze and no rain, and on my fourth run I sliced 1.4 seconds off of last years time. And I finally beat Phil Short's mini, which has taken me 3 years to achieve. A return visit will definitely be on the cards for next year.



Shelsley Walsh July 2nd 2005

Another convoy run with Steve Brown meant an 5:30am departure from home, but because we arrived at 7am, we had plenty of time to unload and park the tow cars and trailers across the road in the paddock area. Walking the hill paid off when we found that the Esses were extremely slippery following overnight rain. Although it stayed dry during the day, with just a sprinkling of rain at lunch, the track dried out and most people recorded new PBs. I managed to go 0.99s quicker

than last year on my final timed run, and finished 2nd fastest FWD car.



The Fiesta is definitely quicker than last year. The changes I made over the winter are paying off, and although it's a quiet year for me, I'm more determined than ever to get out and about more next year. I just have the double lapper event at Curborough in July left, and I can then start planning my changes for next year. I'll be leaving the suspension alone, and making changes to the cylinder head and inlet system, to try to get the standard 2.0 16V engine breathing a little better. And I'll finally be tackling the brakes, one area I can definitely make a massive improvement to.

Roll on 2006!
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