

## The 2003 British Touring Car Championship Rounds 7 & 8, Silverstone.

After their success at Thruxton in the previous meeting the team were optimistic arriving at Silverstone for rounds 7 & 8 of the 2003 season. The car had undergone the usual preparation back at the Swindon base during the break.

**Free Practice 1:** With the rain starting to fall and the track being wet it would prove to be a difficult session. The first problem was visibility or lack of it !! as the speed increased visibility decreased ! James returned to the pits for a quick dry out of the interior and check over to make sure that all was well and sent back out. Shortly after returning to the track an electrical fault occurred and James had to once again return to the pits, following some quick action to resolve the problem James was sent out again to try and get some understanding of the set-up requirements for the track



**Free Practice 2 :** With the conditions changing to dry the team were looking forward to some dry running as they were still unable to complete any testing so far this season. Unfortunately early in the session it became apparent that there was a problem, James was experiencing a large vibration when braking. Upon returning to the pits it was discovered that the left front drive shaft had failed. This would require some good work by all the team during the interval to ensure that the car was ready for the important Qualifying session later.

**Qualifying :** With the car repaired the team were hoping for some good results in the Qualifying session to enable a good grid position for the race the following day. Not having completed any testing the team were suffering with understanding the optimum tyre conditions and when to get the best from them. Setting some consistent lap times James qualified 12<sup>th</sup> overall and a credible 3<sup>rd</sup> in class. Having a better understanding of the car and the reactions to changes made the team would be prepare the car ready for race 1 the following day.



**Race 1 :** A good start off the line saw James right behind an incident involving Tom Chilton and Phil Bennet resulting in him having to take evasive action. This saw him drop from 12<sup>th</sup> to the back of the field. Once settled down James started to set some competitive times being consistently in the mid 1' 30" range. At this pace he soon caught the rest of the pack and quickly went past David Leslie in the works Proton, running 10<sup>th</sup> overall and 4<sup>th</sup> in class. When the pit window opened the decision was made to come in early and complete the compulsory pit stop which was completed in under 6.5 secs this was the best result by the team so far. The quick stop gained some time for James and put him within striking distance of next placed contender in class Gareth Howell who had yet to make his pit stop. The time gained proved valuable as Gareth returned behind James after his pit stop and never gained as James was still setting consistent fast laps. Some gearbox problems did occur again however James continued to the end of the race finishing in 8<sup>th</sup> overall and 2<sup>nd</sup> in class. The team would now have to investigate the cause of the concerns with the gearbox and prepare for the following race in the interval.

**Race 2 :** James was starting to improve on his take off from the line and maintained his position through the first corner safely. Just as he was settling down behind the MG's and making some good times there was an incident ahead. Paul O'Neil and Colin Turkington had come together and as James was about to pass Paul O'Neil on the inside he suddenly turned in not realising James was there. James had nowhere to go and hit Paul's Astra side on almost losing the front bumper but able to limp to the pits. When he arrived in the pits it was soon apparent that the race was over for the Synchro team as the radiator was cracked and the front damage was beyond a quick repair. The team would now have some body repair work to do before the next meeting at Rockingham however the results and times set were very encouraging and they are looking to the next round.

For more information, check the team website: [www.synchromotorsport.com](http://www.synchromotorsport.com)



Synchro Motorsport would like to thank the following partners:

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