



Just 11 days prior to this photo was taken, the car looked like...



... this! A bare shell!



#### MOTORBASE FOCUS BTCC

# 4 WEEK BUILD!

In order to have three cars competing at Knockhill earlier in the season, the Motorbase crewed pulled out all the stops to build a new car in just 4 weeks!



Now that a busy and hard-fought BTCC season has come to close, we can reflect and bring you up to speed on some of the frantic action that took place behind closed Motorbase doors earlier in the summer when we pulled out all the stops to build a third car ready for the race meeting at Knockhill in August.

Obviously well reported, we suffered one of the biggest accidents in BTCC history at Croft on June 10th whilst qualifying. The events in brief were caused during a very wet qualifying session, when Luke Davenport went wide in the left-hander part of the Jim Clarke Esses. When re-joining the circuit, the splitter caught the concrete

which ruptured an oil cooler. This in turn dropped oil on the circuit which caused an unfortunate set of conditions where a huge accident was inevitable.

The result saw Luke collected by a couple of cars who were helpless in the incident, and ultimately Luke, Jeff Smith and Aron Smith were badly injured and hospitalised for some time.

There is no doubt that recent regulations for the BTCC saved Luke's life. The way the seat is mounted is designed to move the driver away from the impact. The seat is also located as close to the centre of the car as possible. And the new FIA seat and seat mount regulations mean that the Corbeau Revenge seat is the safest strongest seat we've ever used in the BTCC.

Luckily Luke was OK (he's even been back behind the wheel at a recent test which is fantastic news!) but the car was a total loss. Initially we weren't planning on building a new Focus for 2017, but the BTCC licence regulations meant that we would lose a licence if we didn't have three cars ready

for Knockhill.

Ordinarily there are 1,000 man-hours involved in building a BTCC shell. However, we didn't have that much time. We did, however, have a shell which we were planning to build in the closed season at a more leisurely pace, so this was soon

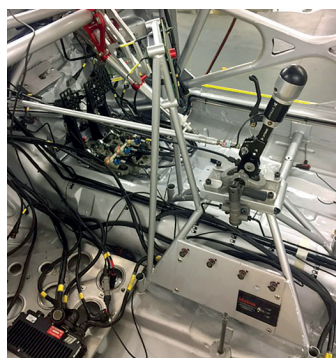
## TIMELINE

- 10th June** - Luke's accident at Croft during qualifying
- 11th July** - Deliver partly prepared shell to Willie Poole Motorsport Services
- 17th July** - FIA shell inspection clearance on damaged shell
- 2nd August** - Collect shell from WPMS
- 3rd August** - Shell painted (at midnight)
- 4th August** - Shell plumbed by ATEC
- 8th August** - Race car set up ready for shakedown
- 9th August** - Shakedown completed
- 12th August** - FP1 completed
- 13th August** - Finish P9 and win Jack Sears Trophy for the weekend





The shell was even painted at midnight to keep the build moving forward!



The finished car went for its shake-down just 3 days before it competed at Knockhill

pressed into service ahead of schedule.

The initial five shells have all been built in-house at Motorbase Performance, overseen by Richard Townsend. But with such a tight deadline the only option this time was to employ WPMS (Willie Pool Motorsport Services) to do the shell, while Richard assisted. This was the only way we could get the shell completed in time and to the standard that we'd accept.

Willie worked his magic and actually got the shell ready two days earlier than planned. This was critical for us, as once we'd received the car we still needed to prep the shell and paint it before we could then start the task of building it up again.

There were 9 weeks between the accident at Croft and the first time the car needed to be on track again. But by the time the decision was made, we were down to less than 6 weeks. And by the time work had actually started, when Willie Pool received the shell, we had just 4 weeks!

Team boss, David Bartrum, went up to Willie's and collected the shell in the early hours of 2nd August. At 7am the car was in our bodyshop being prepped by four guys. This involved final bits of welding, grinding, cleaning applying seals and tape, and lots of time-consuming fiddly bits that aren't obvious on the finished car. They got that all sorted, and by midnight on the 3rd our paint man, Ants, had the whole car painted and ready for the build.

Then we managed to get 'Pete the Pipe', as he's affectionately known, from ATEC to sacrifice a day's holiday to come down on the morning of the 4th to install all of the

hard lines (fuel, power steering, brakes, and airjack lines) into the freshly painted shell. This was a day's work along with installing the wiring loom. With the shell plumbed, it was soon time to install all the new suspension, bodywork, engine, gearbox, and so on. Basically, anything that made the car start, stop, or steer still had to be fitted!

As if things weren't tight enough for time, the venue of the next round couldn't have been any more challenging. Had the next meeting been at Brands Hatch we could have continued working on the car right up until the last minute, more or less wheeling the car out of HQ and straight onto the track. But the next meeting wasn't Brands... it was Knockhill. Which meant we had to factor in the lengthy drive and effectively move our schedule forward an entire day. This basically meant the car had to be fully finished, fully shaken-down, and race-ready by the end of the day on the 9th.

The shakedown test is an installation check to make sure everything works as it should. We also bed-in the brakes, practice start launches, and generally ensure we put the car through its paces. Having only had one day in the BTCC car, Rory Butcher came down from Knockhill to complete the shakedown before making his way back up to Scotland ready for the race weekend.

As usual the car was built perfectly and it was ready for Knockhill and Rory's first BTCC race. He did everyone proud, with a double points-scoring finish on his debut and 100% finishing record too! What better reward for the team's stellar effort in getting an entire brand new car built in around 4 weeks! **FF**

## THE CREW

**Shell build** - Willie Poole Motorsport Services and Richard Townsend

**Midnight drivers** - David Bartrum and Tim Hull

**Paintwork** - Ants Waller and Mark Lawrence

**Mechanical build** - Tom Grainger, Pete Haynes, Jason Cox and Tim Hull

**Outside contractor** - ATEC pipework

## WILLIE POOL'S THOUGHTS

Willie remembers the challenging build too: "We started work on the chassis on 11th July and completed 1st August; 17 day's work in total with between 16 and 36 hours labour per day to complete. On the last day (1st August) when David came to collect the chassis himself, we had worked 52hrs between Richard, Ade and myself before loading it on to the truck at 00.15am 2nd August.

"We worked 432hrs in total," Willie continues, "this was initially helped by the Motorbase staff who de-bracketed the chassis to allow us to get straight on to the preparation and build. This was a monumental task for anyone to take on in such a short space of time, and without the help of Richard (who had built the 5-previous chassis) and our suppliers, I don't think that it would have been possible. We like to push ourselves to the limit at WPMS and have yet to let a customer down, it just goes to show what can be achieved when people work together."

## CONTACT

[www.wp-ms.co.uk](http://www.wp-ms.co.uk)