

amused.

Word had it that Motors TV were due to turn up and make a star out of Desmond Finnan and his unreasonably-priced car, but we waited and waited. They took their time and probably a long lunch before they felt able to turn up to do the feature on the Club and our cars. The eventual film was a well-produced piece and helped to raise our profile. Thanks to Jacky Morel, our man in France, who knew the Mo-

tors TV boss and helped ensure this happened. They wanted some onboard video of our track laps, but no one is quite sure if they managed it or who took them round, if they did. Desmond and John Gorbould were interviewed and didn't disgrace themselves, or the Club. Jacky is aiming to get the interviews published in a new French GT40/Cobra magazine and we look forward to seeing the English version in due course. Thanks to Jacky and Tony Jasper for their part in getting Motors TV involved.

Evening was soon upon us. The light and heat started to fade, but the anticipation did the reverse. The Club Paddock was alive with a buzz of excitement. The briefing took place, Dr John giving a masterly oratory, Ian Anderson and Debbie K distributed the passes and it finally dawned that we would soon be let loose on the famous fabulous 13.65 km circuit. Suddenly the prospect of the track laps being at twilight started to have its appeal - it was no longer oppressively hot and a glorious sunset beckoned.

The track laps were a revelation - on many levels. For a few laps we were able to make the most of the track, but then it got complicated. Cars off in the kitty litter or Armco just before Arnage, oil flags from Arnage to just before the Porsche Curves, cars suffering and having to be pulled up, some mad Italian machinery, whose drivers had needed Dr John's briefing, were getting a bit too enthusiastic!

In one Gulf '40 sat Ian Stewart, who had rashly accepted a ride with Desmond; between them they had nearly 140 years of good living. Ian was under strict instructions not to alter Shonagh's seat belt setting, so if you notice Ian's higher pitched voice post-LMC, you now know why. However he was glad he didn't adjust his straps as Mr F was determined to enjoy lapping to the full. Maybe Desmond should have listened a little more to Dr John's briefing, as not long after the main straight at the first corners, paper and other oddments in the car developed a mind of their own and flew weightlessly around as the Gulf car sped up to a very respectable track speed. Later in the lap came the spectacles, thrown at the co-driver and no longer needed by the driver. Late braking is much easier when you can't see the corner coming! However, the passenger described the car and pilot as superb and the experience will stay with him a long time, along no doubt with the high voice.

Other members were doing their own thing around the track; Paul Walton was determined to keep all of the Italian Stallions (or should that be Italian Donkeys) behind him and nearly managed it - later posting a video on uTube to prove the point. Everyone had a tale to tell and most were very pleased to have taken part. Some had new carburettor set ups that limited top speed (really?), poor Ege Ferguson blew a



Maxi at speed



Dick Townsend, lights ablaze



Pete Thompson avec Chairman



Fred de Braey speeding on

<< Le Mans Classic Report

tyre, another was given some of the paint from a wildly driven Ferrari. Most members seemed to get something positive out of the track time and, although it may not have been exactly as promised by the organisers, I believe that we were very lucky to have been given the chance to drive the circuit in this way. In future years there will be more interest in such laps from other clubs (Porsche to name but one) and we may not get first option to participate in 2012.

For my part, I wish my engine hadn't decided to become a V7 after 1½ laps, as this put an end to any banzai lappery that was planned. We just enjoyed the view and nursed the car with its overheating and rough-sounding engine until the end, when a loose plug cap was diagnosed - obviously caused by the high G forces applied in the early laps!

Then it was back to our billets and to recount how well we'd done and to savour the fact that we'd been there!

Following the lunch, the heat refused to go away so everyone seemed to be heading for the grandstands to find some shade and view the start of the racing.

The Racing

The first race away was Plateau 3 for 1957 to 1961 cars and the Lotus 15, number 4 car, won. However the overall 24 hour winner in this group would be the Maserati T61 Birdcage, the 35 car, driven by Balz and Stippler.

For the GT40 followers, the next race was for us. Five original cars in Plateau 4, but only one dominated. The 34 car of Christian Glasel won all 3 races with a combined winning margin of 8 minutes. Shades of Mr Bellm come to mind. Eventually 3rd with a 3rd, 9th and 6th was the Historic Automobiles engineered car. Only a year ago this car was in the USA in a far from respectable state, a great turnaround. The red 42 car was driven by Manuel and Diogo Ferrao, and Simon at Historic Automobiles can be very pleased with his efforts.



The lunch on the Saturday at *Le Balcon* was excellent and very enjoyable. Drinks kept flowing, along with a good flow of water, much needed in the airless restaurant. The food was good and plentiful, the ambience was great, the heat was less welcome. Everyone again seemed to enjoy themselves.



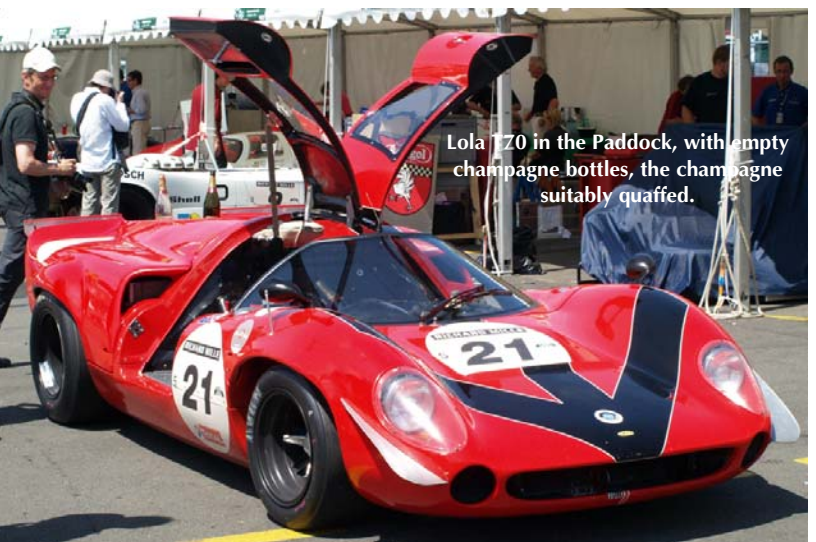
Next up was Plateau 5, more '40 fun. Five more GT40s including Claude Nahum. Also in the line up was the number 3 car driven by Lee Maxted-Page, who was entered to drive a total of 4 cars over the weekend, 2 in the same plateau! But with initials of LMP it's only to be expected. Also in this group was the 39 car of Chris Ball who would unfortunately only manage 12 laps over the weekend.

Claude didn't have much luck either, only managing 9 laps, due to transmission problems.

His spirits were lifted by the result of his usual co-



Chris Bailey even went as far as to say it was the highlight of the weekend



Lola T20 in the Paddock, with empty champagne bottles, the champagne suitably quaffed.