

Never Say Nevers Again!

by Phil Sivell >>

On 29th April, I joined a group of Club members on a trip to the Classic Days 2015 event at the Circuit de Nevers, better known to most as Magny-Cours, the base for Ligier in the 1990s and home of the French Grand Prix from 1991 to 2008.

We assembled at the Le Shuttle on Wednesday morning, the group consisting of Paul Brameld, in his blue GTD; Tony and Janet Hunt in their silver GTD; David and Barbara Scaife in their yellow KVA; Ian Stewart breaking the mould in a red 1989 E30 BMW M3; and Paul Walton in his black Tornado, in which I was travelling.

Our crossing to France was straightforward, but we split up almost immediately as a result of differing needs for fuel. We weren't helped by a minor electrical problem on Tony's car, which developed an appetite for fuses when his headlights were on and the fans were running. As a result he had to raid the collective stock and make some minor modifications to get going.

We then all headed down to our overnight stop at Rouen for a well deserved beer after we had sorted out a more permanent repair for Tony's electrics. Job finished, the cars were prepared for the night - covers in place in the expectation of rain. David's use of clingfilm to seal his car for the evening caused the odd surprised look from the locals!



Preparations for the night at Rouen

We woke to heavy rain - an unfortunate portent of things to come! The plan was to run down to Le Mans to visit the excellent museum. We all made it, arriving in various states of sodden dishevelment! I discovered that heavy rain and a long road trip in Paul's Tornado are not a good combination to guarantee an arrival in the same dry condition that you set out. When we got to the museum, I was decidedly wet - possibly not unrelated to the seat padding acting as a sponge and absorbing as much liquid as possible from the floor-pan and passing it to me.

Another slight problem we discovered was that the combination of a car increasingly full of water, with 2 people breathing, resulted in slight misting on the screen. When I say slight, I could possibly be accused of understatement. In reality, very little could

be seen as the ventilation system had given up the very unequal fight. It was only a plentiful supply of tissues and the use of one of my camera lens cleaning cloths that enabled us to see anything at all!

We discovered that all the cars had experienced something like the journey that Paul and I had enjoyed (sorry that should read 'endured') - getting increasingly wet and seeing s** all. This was except for Ian, whose BMW seemed to be coping fine, with Ian greatly enjoying telling us how good his car was and how comfortable and dry he was - that would change!



A rather sad P/1020 in the museum



M Piquera makes a point to an attentive audience

At the museum, we were introduced to the curator, Francis Piquera, who showed us round. Francis has an almost encyclopaedic knowledge of all things Le Mans and we couldn't have wished for a better guide.

The museum is superb, with cars from all vintages and some amazing dioramas showing the pits as they would have looked in different eras. From the avenue of 'Les Heros' - the drivers, constructors, team managers, and even the odd actor, who make up the legend of Le Mans, via the impressive circuit model, to all the different cars through the ages,