

CLASSIC DRIVER

D-Types return to scene of historic 1957 victory



In celebration of the famous Coventry company's last D-Type win - and 1-2-3-4-6 finish - 50 years ago at La Sarthe, two historic cars will be at this year's event.

The actual winning and second placed cars from 1957 are scheduled to reappear on the track at the Sarthe circuit in June, with the kind permission of their owners Evert Louwman and Sir Anthony Bamford. It will be the first time they have been reunited at the scene since that epic domination of the world's most challenging race. They will be joined by the similar cars owned by the Jaguar Daimler Heritage Trust and Dick Skipworth.

The celebration has been painstakingly planned by Michael Quinn, grandson of Jaguar's founder Sir William Lyons, in conjunction with the Jaguar Daimler Heritage Trust.

"The 1957 victory for Jaguar was such a landmark at Le Mans that we were determined that the 50th anniversary of it should be properly celebrated. It was, after all, a major British triumph and a great achievement for a relatively small manufacturer at the time. The Le Mans victories really helped put Jaguar firmly on the world map" said Michael.

"Now, in 2007, the Automobile Club de l'Ouest has given its permission for the 1957 D-Types to take part in the 24 Hour trophy presentation on the start-finish straight, just before this year's race begins. Additionally they will be driven around the circuit in the Motor Racing Legends Cavalcade on Saturday morning for three victory laps."

Jaguar had officially pulled out of racing in 1957, but were focused on adding to their success at Le Mans and so provided fully-prepared D-Types for legendary Scottish team Ecurie Ecosse, which had won the previous year, to compete on their behalf.

After a tough 24 hours that had taken a high toll on the finishers, it was the partnership of Ron Flockhart and Ivor Bueb that eventually seized victory and thereby making Jaguar the most successful marque in the history of the race. It was also Ron's second successive win. Right behind were Ninian Sanderson and John Lawrence, and third place went to Jean Lucas and Jean-Marie Brussin. Belgian journalist Paul Frere and 'Freddy' Rouselle finished fourth, with Mike Hawthorn and Masten Gregory sixth.

Half a century later, 1957 remains one of the most dominant victories in the history of the classic 24-hour endurance race, and crowned a hat-trick of wins at Le Mans for Jaguar and its innovative D-Type. These wins in turn followed on from two earlier successes with the C-Type, winning in 1951 and 1953.

It was also significant as a fitting tribute to Jaguar's tireless efforts to bring success and motor racing glory back to Britain in the 1950s, a golden era of motor sport.. The Midlands-based manufacturer would not win there again until the late 1980s, the Silk Cut Jaguar XJR-9LM taking first and fourth in 1988.

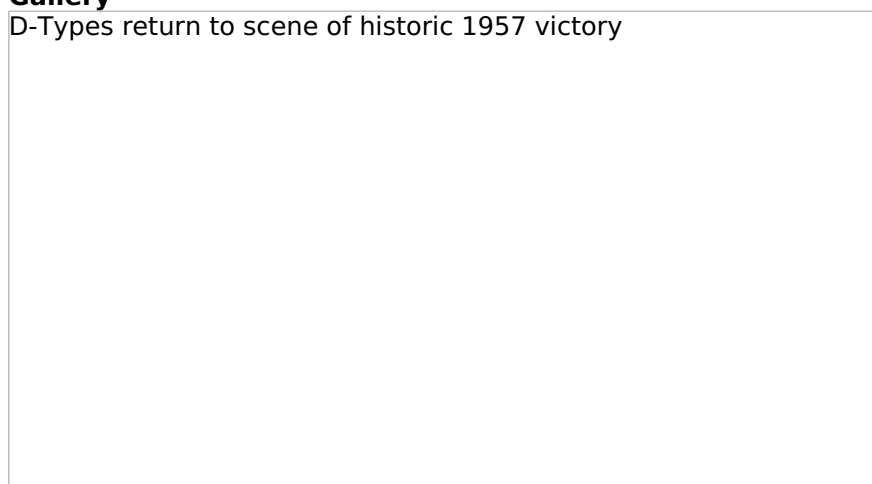
The 2007 Le Mans 24 Hour race takes place on the 8.45 miles French circuit of La Sarthe during June 16 and 17.

Story - Classic Driver

Photo - Jaguar Daimler Heritage Trust

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