

CLASSIC DRIVER

Le Mans Legend 2007



On the morning of Saturday 16th June, a few hours before the start of the modern Le Mans 24Hrs, the one-hour support race dramatically demonstrated that historic cars are every bit as exciting to watch as modern machinery. Or perhaps more so - since this year's Le Mans Legend was surely one of the most exciting historic races ever seen.

How often does a car sitting 57th on the starting grid come through to win the race outright? That's what **Shaun Lynn** achieved in his **Ford GT40**, carving his way through the entire field to snatch victory from the superbly-driven **Ferrari 250LM** of **Peter Hardman**. Crowds of spectators who had come to watch the modern race stopped in their tracks to see the historic action unfold.

The dare-devil driving of the eventual winner was just one part of the spectacle, however, as the unpredictable weather switched rapidly between bright sunshine and heavy rain. At the start of the race it seemed set to be a battle between Hardman's 250LM and the **Lola T70** of **Andre** and **Thomas Bailly**, until the Lola came off at the Ford Chicane and sat beached in the gravel trap. The Lola did finally get going again to finish 9th.



Meanwhile **Nicky Leventis** drove a magnificent race in his **Ferrari P3**, constantly taking and re-taking third place from a very determined **Richard Meins** in his **GT40**. On the penultimate lap, Meins attempted a daring manoeuvre on Leventis at the entry to the Ford Chicane but ended up crossing the gravel trap and hitting a small bank of sand. The red GT40 took off as it hit the sand, all four wheels in the air, and came down hard enough to throw open the doors before Meins rejoined the circuit and continued the race. At this point, Audi engineers from the modern race could be seen watching the historic action with mouths agape.

Tony Dron managed an outstanding result in his **Ferrari 330LMB**, taking fifth place overall and first in class in a 1963 front-engined car up against more recent, mid-engined machinery. Other class winners included **David** and **James Cottingham** in their **Ferrari 500 TRC**; **Tony Pickering's Jaguar D-type**, driven by his son, modern Le Mans driver **Gavin Pickering** and **Spencer Marsh**; **Jos Koster** and **Michiel Van Duijvendijk** in their **Porsche 904**; the **Renault A210** of **Henri Stepak** and **Francois Bourdin**; and the **Lola Mk1** of **Robin Longdon**.



Notably, both the **1959 Le Mans-winning Aston Martin DBR1**, and the **DBR1** which finished second that year, were in the **Le Mans Legend** race. It's thought that this is the first time they have raced together at Le Mans since they were there in period. This time, however, the result was reversed as the '59 winner – driven by **Dr Ulrich Bez**, Chief Executive of **Aston Martin**, and **Sir Stirling Moss** – was pipped to the post by **Adrian Beecroft** and **David Hall** in their DBR1. It was Beecroft's first drive at Le Mans, and he will no doubt be one of the many who remember this race for a very long time.



Story - Charis Whitcombe

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