

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## MOTUL Tour Britannia 2007



**This year's Tour Britannia, the three-day classic event for pre-1976 race, rally and touring cars, was a roaring success. From 3rd to 6th September, the Tour took place over a mix of circuits, hills and stages, linked by relaxed road sections meandering through English countryside.**

It was clear from the outset that the **Tour Britannia** (this year supported by **MOTUL**) has gained hugely in popularity since its inception in 2005. A record 76 entry applications were received by the closing date, almost double the previous year's figure, ranging from **Minis** and **Ford Escorts** to competition **Ferraris** and **Porsches**. The organisers were particularly pleased at the high number of Touring-Regularity Category entries.



The Tour began on Monday 3rd September with scrutineering at **Brands Hatch**, followed by a gala dinner overlooking the circuit. The following morning saw the competition get underway – with **Porsche** cars dominating the early battle for honours. The first day's action covered racing on the **Brands Hatch** circuit, as well as speed tests over sealed-surface roads at the **Brooklands** race track and the **Longcross** testing ground. At the end of the first leg, the **Porsche 911** of **Howard Redhouse** had the Competition category lead by the slimmest possible margin – just 0.1 sec – from **John Grant's Chevron B16**. **Nick Whale's Porsche 911 Carrera RS** was a further 2.8 seconds adrift. Meanwhile, the Regularity category was led by **Paul Hernaman** and **Ray Crowther** in their **Porsche 911**.



The first of the muscle cars was the **Chevrolet Camaro Z28** of **Richard Lloyd** and **Alan Rivers**. “**Brands Hatch** brings back a lot of memories,” said Lloyd. “I think the last time I raced here was in 1974!”

Wednesday saw the crews leave the overnight stop at **Coombe Abbey** in Warwickshire for another full day of action, including two runs at MIRA and races at both **Donington Park** and **Mallory**, along with a number of stages linked by quiet country roads. In the Competition category, **John Grant/Charles Elwell** took their **Chevron B16** from fifth overnight into the lead of the 43-strong category. **Paul Hernaman** and **Ray Crowther** continued to lead a closely-fought Regularity in their **Porsche 911**, while **John** and **Chris Clark** snatched the overall Tour Britannia lead – based on **Index of Performance** – despite a handling problem with their **Jaguar E-type**: “The car was understeering a lot on the quick corners at Mallory Park,” we were told.



The final day saw the competitors head north from the **Coombe Abbey** base for two stages at historic **Cholmondeley Castle**, followed by a hillclimb and then on to **Oulton Park** for some racing. Then it was back to **Coombe Abbey** for the finish. Mere seconds split crews as they fought for category honours. In the **Competition** category, **John Grant** and **Charles Elwell** powered their awesome **Chevron B16** to victory, while in **Regularity** **Michael Birch's Porsche Carrera RS** claimed honours in his first year in the event. He was, it must be said, co-driven by former two-time winner of the category, Jeremy Haylock, who has previously navigated **John Ruston** to two Tour Britannia victories. The overall **MOTUL Tour Britannia Index of Performance** award was won by **Porsche 911** driver **Paul Howells**, navigated by **Travis** drummer, **Neil Primrose**.



The award for the highest-placed pre-1965 car went to **John Sheldon** and **Leslie Stevens** in their **Lotus Elan**, while the **'Hardest Triers'** award went to **Patrick Blakeney-Edwards** and **Andrew Hall** in their **Frazer Nash** – a car the crew constantly rebuilt throughout the event. They rolled into a ditch in the final test at Weston Park, but neither was seriously injured and – courageously – they still made it to the finish. “I’d like to thank everyone who has stopped and helped us when we broke down over the last few days,” said a mildly bruised **Blakeney-Edwards**. “It gave us the will to carry on.”

The date of the **2008 Tour Britannia** will be announced shortly.

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**Photos:** *Tour Britannia*

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