



AURORA 101 in Greece

Phaethon 2004, 22-28 May 2004

Report 3 - Wednesday 19th May

Another day, another check with the port. Where is the Evergreen Line in "Magnavia"? The news was that it may arrive by midnight but a port strike is looming for the following day. This piece of good cheer allowed the team now joined by its last member from Holland Bram Soethoudt to get out on the road on the rally course.



We were joined by Chrysa from Ford, who was searching for an off-road track for Ford's launch of one of their Maverick models. Out on the new freeway, well out of town we picked up a hitchhiker who just happened to be an expert rally driver which Chrysa allowed to drive her own vehicle. Of course this was all prearranged even though the hitchhiker was challenged 5 times as to what he was doing on the freeway. He said he was counting cars.

Before long we had reached Corinth, the site of the famous Isthmus. This is an absolutely straight canal cut through the rock joining Peloponnisos to the rest of the mainland, providing a shipping short-cut to avoid circumnavigating Peloponnisos. It was also the site of the famous Isthmus bungy jump that we have come to learn that team member Jack McArthur is dying to attempt.



The day is clear, sunny and cool. As we travel along the coast we wish we were on a photographic expedition instead of a rally route check. Special Stages 1 and 2 before the end of the day at Patras look to be fast and exciting. The highway itself is one and a half lanes wide, which in Greece means 2 lanes. We will need to protect the solar car carefully.



At Patras we were able to see the new suspension bridge under construction. Until it's completion the crossing to Antirio (start of Day 4 of the rally) will be undertaken on car ferries. There are plenty of them.



We now started the route for the 2nd day of the rally, along the minor highway to Olympia. There's trouble ahead. Sections of this road are so steep and twisty that it might all be too much for solar cars to achieve. The

Special Stages on this section are good competitive roads. We came out of the hills into Olympia itself, full of tourists, remarking at how large the archaeological site was. But our tourism will have to wait till next Tuesday when we come through with the solar car.



We then started the course for the 3rd day of the rally, a good flat high speed run next to the coast, returning to Patras. Jack had his 1st go at driving in a left-hand drive country and honestly thought it was more of a thrill than he expected of his cherished bungee jump. By 8pm, we were in thick of Piraeus traffic, looking for Kon's relatives on Hadzikiriakou Street near the meat shop. We found it, dumped Kon and headed to Hotel London. There the second support vehicle from Ford, a Ranger 4x4 pick-up had arrived complete with tow bar and permit to tow.

Maybe tomorrow we will see Aurora 101.