



AURORA 101 in Greece

Phaethon 2004, 22-28 May 2004

Report 5 - Friday 21st May

Thankfully it was not Friday the 13th, but it was the last day that we could prepare our solar car for the official events. If it turned up.

At 11am, the call we were waiting for came. Andreas Papageorgiou said that we should head to the ELPA depot north-west of the city in Elefsina to meet the crash truck that was to finally take us to our customs cleared shipping container. So another hesitant crawl through unfamiliar inner city Athens traffic and onto the port environs.



ELPA is one of the Phaethon 2004 sponsors and a bit like the RACV, this company has sponsored many motor racing events including the famous Acropolis rally. Still, there was some confusion as our first ELPA driver was to change shifts before he could get the solar car and us to Hellenikon. He did guide us to the depot where the container had arrived, and it was a pleasure to open it and to find that our shipment was in excellent condition. Soon the second ELPA driver had us on board for the cross Athens trip.



By 4.30pm we arrived at Hellenikon and unloaded our 6x4 trailer and solar car to the surprise of the other competitors. We needed to immediately check the batteries, the electrical circuitry and the tyres before we attempted a test run just before dark. Kon Kotsonis set out to learn the course and by the time he had covered three laps, or 10km he had spun the car twice and in the second occasion blew out 2 tyres. The course is very abrasive and the serious teams are all scrambling to find and fit regular motorcycle tyres to cope with the road surface. Our second driver Seona Candy had a brief single lap before it was too dark to see.



In the evening it was back to work on the car to get it ready for the first official event on Saturday, that of scrutineering.



Some of the teams have no experience in a track-racing event so face it with trepidation. The team from Taiwan asked for example how many cars would be on the track at once and were shocked to hear that it would be all of them. The track layout will enable the faster cars to reach 120km/h, Kon's fastest today was 110km/h.



We have still to see the second team from Italy and the Greek team from Patras. Otherwise all entrants all entrants have arrived, and we expect this to be a much harder competition than it looked on paper.

One seeming success has been the modified trailer which we brought, it has performed as well as we had hoped and will be useful tomorrow when we go to the centre of the city for scrutineering.



We missed the official reception in the evening, but we are pleased to be in possession of our solar car five days later than scheduled.