



AURORA 101 in Greece Phaethon 2004, 22-28 May 2004

Report 10 - Wednesday 26th May

The hotels being used by the organisers for this rally must be shocked at the waves of solar car people, more than 200 in all, descending for breakfast between 7 and 7.30am. World solar car locusts!



Then it's the line up at the checkout counter, anything from the mini bar, any phone calls, any use of the internet and so on. Nine different nationalities and languages usually speaking broken English finally settle up.



Brad persisted with more work to find the bug. Actually it's good luck to see a green beetle in Greece, and we had a couple resting themselves on the solar panel. Brad measured currents, changed more parts, tested the motor but all to no avail. We were still limiting ourselves to 60% of the potential power, and expecting the switch off-problems to continue.



It was a clear and sunny day, befitting this important historical city in Greece. Kon, the chief Internet subscriber, failed to find an open Internet facility and we therefore apologise for the delay in these reports. Speaking of different languages, imagine the job the Clerk of Course has in communicating his instruction to the multinational driver team. Today the Clerk of Course sported a broken nose, black eyes and lacerations to his face from accidentally running into a horizontal steel tube.



A number of teams had little to do, their cars were running well so it was ice creams all round. By 10am the solar cars were off on day 3 of Phaethon 2004.



The first Special Stage for the day was a straight 6km speed test, Aurora 101 reached 130km/h but without seeing

the final results we know that a number of other cars can do the same. Event results are posted on the website www.phaethon2004.org.



This stretch of road back to Patras provided a chance to have Seona Candy drive for the first time in this event. She put on her blue overalls, her gloves, race helmet, radio kit and slowly left the end of Special Stage 1. Soon she became familiar with the car again and was cruising at 80-90km/h. Most of this road was the famous Greek one and a half Greek highway where drivers attempted to pass someone in the main lane in either the left or right hand side. One brave motor scooter driver got right behind Aurora 101 and stood up on his bike for a better look.



As we approached Patras, we rejoined the main highway where Seona had her first taste of 120km/h. Only the side winds which were extremely strong slowed her down.



At the second Special Stage was a repeat of the Special Stage of day 1, so it was a chance for drivers to see if they could beat their previous times. Kon was back in the driver's seat and recorded 4:43, an improvement of 1:06 from his run on Monday. This was still with 60% power and 4 shutdowns during this run. At least the quick reset lever seemed to be working.



After this stage it was back to Patras University and sure enough Brad was back to looking for "the Bug". The search started with a long phone call with Dave at Tritium to discuss the problem, and this gave Brad several more ideas to follow.

Meanwhile Jack and Bram started to search for why our third motor had locked up, and quickly found that 1 magnet had displaced itself radially. That will be a simple repair to be conducted in Japan when we race at Suzuka in the "Dream Cup".

It's been great to see teams like Futura from Italy and Heliomet from Germany stay in the rally in spite of having slower cars. The Brazilian "Banana" solar car avoided the trip to Olympia to repair their hinged solar array, which had lifted whilst they were being transported on one of the support trucks.

The city of Patras is treating this solar car community very well, and we are looking forward to the visit to the local major vineyard. Some people are really looking forward to it.

Tomorrow we will be on the ferry across the Corinthiakos Gulf, for a rally start in Antirio at 11am. The magnificent new bridge will be opened just before the Olympic Games.

