

Classic and Clubman, Pre-war Le Mans round 1 March 2022.

A slight breeze rippled the bleached white coveralls of a line of figurers. Like a line of mannequins each stuck in a sort of action pose along the side of the tarmac track. Each figure head turned to their left the concentration focused on a man in a cheap suit barely containing his ample middle holding aloft the national flag of France. A crowd held their breaths and the noise of distant dogs, chatter of small children and the crack of assembled flags fluttering on a row of poles.

The suit dropped the flag and the line of mannequins spring forward some at a trot some at the gallop and a few at a saunter towards a line of cars on the opposite kerb each lined up at 45 degrees fully hooded and glinting in mid-day sun.

Mr Bertrum Whittle leaped into his waiting Bentley 4½ Litre emblazoned with the number 8, two presses of the starter and the motor fired and revved.

Mr Duncan Sykes similarly rolled into the sister car number 7, only hampered by the hem of his suit catching on the windscreen mounted side light.

Mr Herman Inwood had forgone his usual break of fast for a continental affair to aid his well-practised sprint, tuck and lead into the Mercedes SSK red liver leather driver's seat.

Mr Giovanni Tetley trotted to his Alfa Romeo 8C, his cigarette spreading ashes as he cocked his leg over the low door and into place.

Mr Rodderick Monkman sauntered across the track, pulling on his string backed gloves and repositioning his tweed cap, to his waiting Blue MG K3 Magnette.

The cars streamed away from the pit line as their engines warmed and clutches grumbled. The Mercedes and MG took up the early charge, but the red Alfa began to come through as the battle between MG and Mercedes intensified with the Bentleys struggling in corners behind. In the next heat the MG broke away leaving the Mercedes and Alfa to battle and the two Bentleys swapped positions.

Heat three and Herman had to push through from the back to catch and pass both Bentleys and the Alfa leaving the MG and Rodderick clear at the front. The Alfa had to do battle with both the Alfa and Mr Whittle's Bentley.

As the moon rose and darkness fell the positions looked as below.

Position	Driver	Laps
1	Russ Monkman	160.444
2	Allan Inwood	158.434
3	John Tetley	152.567
4	Craig Whittle	123.718
5	Dave Sykes	118.533

Driver			
Russ Monkman	51.981	55.187	53.276
Allan Inwood	51.808	53.808	52.818
John Tetley	53.562	50.609	48.397
Craig Whittle	44.902	40.743	38.073
Dave Sykes	37.205	41.233	40.095