



Normandy Beach Race Plage de Ouistreham

Words and Images: *Philip Newsome*

We came across the Normandy Beach Race almost by accident. Our original plan had been to attend Les Grandes Heures at Montlhéry but when this event was cancelled we decided to see what else was on offer in France that weekend.

Sword Beach was one of three Anglo-Canadian landing areas on June 6th 1944, D-Day. East of Juno Beach, Sword is located between the localities of Langrune-sur-Mer and Ouistreham and represented the eastern flank of the Allied amphibious attack in Normandy. The initial landings were achieved with relatively low casualties, but the advance from the beach was slowed by traffic congestion and resistance in heavily defended areas behind the beachhead.

Our day *sur la plage* could not have been further removed from the mayhem and carnage that prevailed some 75 years earlier but there was, nevertheless, a very tangible connection with that era. The beach was crammed with hot-rods and bikes that would not have seemed too out of place in the 1940s. Beach racing is one of the fastest growing areas of motorsport; without doubt it is also one of the coolest.

We turned up not really knowing what to expect and without any press accreditation or special passes. Yes it would have been great to have been admitted to the inner sanctum of the paddock but the wonderful thing about beach racing is that, in all honesty, you can take great photos from anywhere on the beach. Indeed, the majesty and sheer magnitude of the beach almost demands that you take a huge step backwards and look upon it from afar and in awe.

The images that follow are in effect a postcard from a wonderful, warm autumnal day in Northern France. No famous faces, nor modern technical wizardry. Just plain old-fashioned hot rods and the people who cherish them.





Wrenches clanging, knuckles banging
A drop of blood
A new part here, an old part... there
A hotrod had been built!
A patchwork, mechanical, quilt

An extract from *Race Day* by Zeeb











