



# classiccars

# COBRA AT 50

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Sir Stirling Moss's OSCA FS 372 was among 30-plus cars in action at Nassau



Lotus 15 (left) won Governor's Trophy in '59; Maserati 450S (right) was third in '57

## HOPES HIGH FOR A REGULAR 'MONACO OF THE CARIBBEAN'

**MORE THAN 30 CLASSIC RACING** and road cars from Europe and the US took part in December's inaugural Bahamas Speed Week Revival at Nassau, boosting hopes of a permanent event on the historic racing calendar. 'We certainly want to do it again – we want to create a Monaco of the Caribbean,' said Revival president Jimmie Lowe.

Rob Walton's Maserati 450S and Ean Pugh's Lotus 15 Climax were among cars returning to Nassau after competing there in the Fifties. Walton's Maserati came third in the Governor's Trophy in 1957 and Pugh's Lotus won it in '59.

The competitive action was low-key this year, with a couple of more modern entries (Dodge Viper, Ford GT) too. With not a lot of effort Phil Brey's Ford GT took fastest hill climb honours on a 760-yard run to the 18th-century Fort Charlotte, with David Cottingham of DK Engineering the fastest of the classics in a 1965 Jaguar E-type S1 4.2 coupé at 42sec.

Despite a wet surface the older cars were more determined in the

timed 1.1-mile sprint on the roads around the colourful fish restaurants of Arawak Cay and the beach leading into Nassau. Stephen Bond clinched the fastest time of 1min 19sec in a 1955 Lister-Bristol – 5sec quicker than the Ford GT. 'It was such an eclectic mix of cars,' he smiled. 'It's been great because everyone's so enthusiastic.'

The relaxed schedule included a concours d'élégance, a reception at Government House and dinner at the Graycliff Hotel, once home to the Duke of Windsor.

Also back, as event patron, was 1961 Nassau Tourist Trophy winner Sir Stirling Moss, who took tourism minister Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace on a lap of the sprint circuit in his 1955 OSCA FS 372. The minister spoke of the need for a dedicated track nearer to Nassau than the old Oakes Field circuit. Moss agreed, saying: 'Yes, it certainly needs a track and some more competitive racing. But it's a good time of year to do it – when the cars aren't doing anything in Europe. It's an excellent idea to bring it back.'



## Simon Kidston

*Look what Father Christmas brought me...*



### WHAT DID SANTA BRING YOU THEN?

Hopefully more than socks and another 'cool cars guide' of the variety beloved of well-intentioned relatives stuck for present ideas.

I don't know whether he's doing quantitative easing at the North Pole, but as they're not in the eurozone presumably the only meltdown they have to worry about is down to reindeer emissions rather than Greek workers retiring at 21.

Closer to home obviously not everyone knows we're supposed to be in the middle of a financial crisis. Did you see the 'Healey 100S dragged out of long-term storage (*Classic Cars*, December 2011) before Christmas and put under the hammer by Bonhams? I'll resist a turkey pun, but if you'd parked it (had it run) at the roadside a generation ago the bin men would have assumed it was left for them. And yet some determined soul stumped up £843,000 for it. You'll remember it as the car that springboarded ill-fated French driver Pierre Levegh and 83 spectators to their deaths when it was hit from behind at the 1955 Le Mans 24-hours. That's the power of a story for you – and you'd be amazed what collectors will pay to own a car that they can unveil at the next summit of their peers with the tantalising introduction: 'This is the actual car that...' rather than the less exciting 'This is a...'

Its seller had owned the car for 42 years and for the first half of those his friends must have thought he was bonkers. To him I say 'well done', but if you think he had all the luck then spare a thought for a well-known Canadian automobilia dealer. He spent a decade chasing the original race suit worn by Steve McQueen – yes, him again – in the film *Le Mans*, before the owner eventually gave in. After a year of slick marketing, when the dealer also wondered if he'd paid too much for it, he finally found a buyer last summer at \$155k (about £100k) and thanked his lucky stars he'd got rid of the world's most expensive pair of dirty old overalls. But now his buyer has resold them at a Hollywood memorabilia auction. 'Do I feel like an ass\*\*\* now?' sighed our Canadian friend afterwards. The auction price? \$984k (£635k). You win some...

Me? Santa kindly left a four-wheeled sled, appropriately enough a red one. Well, more Rosso Oxide actually, but it's been sitting unused in someone's toy cupboard for the past decade and anything red usually has Italian origins which, as the old saying goes, means it started rusting in the sales catalogue.

In the spirit of the age it's a recycled present. No, it's not made from old Coke cans. I believe it's politely known as 're-gifting': you receive something you don't need and take it to the next dinner party to thank your hosts, hoping the original donor isn't sitting next to you. The risk is slightly different in this case because Santa gave me this very same present exactly 25 years ago and, recognising hopeless nostalgia, he rightly assumed I'd like it back for old times' sake.

This teaches me two things. A: you must be getting old when 25 years ago feels like yesterday, and B: price is not proportional to enjoyment because this present cost less than some ladies' handbags. Which will hopefully lead to C: how to explain to the wife that an Alfa Romeo Spider was a very sensible acquisition and won't even take up any space because it's away for the foreseeable future 'having some minor work done...'

*Simon Kidston lives and works in a world filled with the finest classics. In between acting as a consultant to collectors and performing as the multi-lingual presenter at top European events, Geneva-based Simon (www.kidston.com) finds time to enjoy his own cars, including a Porsche 911 Carrera 2.7 RS and a Lamborghini Miura SV.*