

# CLASSIC DRIVER



## Single-seaters vs. spouses at the Credit Suisse Historic Racing Forum

13 September 2016 | Joe Breeze

*Now established as an unmissable feature of the Revival weekend – whether watched live from the Race Control building or heard over the airwaves on Goodwood radio – the Credit Suisse Historic Racing Forum once again providing thrilling conversation between motorsport heroes of all eras...*

At the 2016 Goodwood Revival, Credit Suisse forum regulars Sir Stirling Moss, Jochen Mass, Derek Bell and Alain de Cadenet were joined by IndyCar hero Dario Franchitti and Le Mans winner David Brabham. Master of Ceremonies Henry Hope-Frost was given the (difficult) task of keeping such outspoken personalities on-track of the chosen topic, which this year was 'Closed Cockpit versus Single Seaters: The Path to Motorsport Glory'.



“I did fancy going Grand Prix racing,” began Alain de Cadenet, “but my first wife had already threatened to walk out on me if I went near a Formula One car. She thought they were really dangerous, but she gave me permission to do Le Mans instead – it was misconceived that Le Mans was a pretty safe race in comparison.” When challenged on why he’d uncharacteristically bowed to pressure from the then-Mrs de Cadenet, ‘AdC’ simply replied: “Brigitte Bardot was the best-looking woman in the world at that point, and my first wife ran her a close second.”

Derek Bell, whose name is chiefly linked to sports cars through his numerous Le Mans victories, believed single seaters will always have a crucial role to play in motorsport. “There’s nothing like it in the world. There has to be something at the top, and Formula 1 is the ultimate – whether or not we agree that it’s the most exciting.” The panel went on to discuss the difficulties and complications a young driver faces on his quest to rise through the ranks today, arguing that it’s become more about their parents’ bank balance than raw talent. Sir Stirling was reminded about having to buy his own Maserati 250F in order to demonstrate his talent to top brass at Mercedes. “But back then, a couple of mechanics were all you needed, not 100,” came his reply. “I also let others such as Mike Hawthorn use my car to get a bit of money back.”



As has become customary at the brilliant Credit Suisse Historic Racing Forums, the panel soon took the discussion off-piste. The topic of circuits new and old was touched upon, with modern, Hermann Tilke-deigned tracks compared with the classic venues, some of which are now defunct or experiencing grave financial woes. Unsurprisingly, Sir Stirling was again the provider of one of the best anecdotes: “In those days, almost every weekend I was racing on a circuit which belonged to the town. One thing I learned quite early was that if you went round afterwards and waved at people, you got more start money the next year.”

“There are all these rules now, time penalties and suchlike – I think all that’s a load of crap,” said Sir Stirling in his typical, no-holds-barred manner. “A guy should go out there, beat the other guys and he’s won, simple as that.” After mocking Fernando Alonso’s recent 45-place grid penalty at Spa where, as Hope-Frost quipped, “he almost started the Belgian Grand Prix at Zolder”, the panel discussed overcomplication in modern motorsport and the resulting lack of undiluted drama. “That’s why we’ve got 100,000 people here at Goodwood,” pointed out de Cadenet. Indeed, the lively, entertaining discussions that took place during the hour-long forum were completely in keeping with the inimitable spectacle that is the Revival, and Credit Suisse should be commended for allowing such fearless figures to jostle so freely – even if only verbally on this occasion.

*Photos: Remi Dargegen for Classic Driver*

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