

1951 FRAZER NASH LE MANS REPLICA

Exactly 75 years ago this Sunday (14 June 1951), a fresh-faced Stirling Moss arrived on the Isle of Man for the British Empire Trophy sports car race, paired with this very Frazer Nash Le Mans Replica.

The 136-mile Douglas road circuit was a formidable challenge, but Moss was already emerging as one of Britain's brightest racing talents. Just a year earlier, on the eve of his 21st birthday, he had claimed his first major international victory in the RAC Tourist Trophy.

From the drop of the flag, Moss set the pace. Yet with the race run on a handicap basis, outright speed would not guarantee victory. With five laps remaining, he still needed to claw back eight minutes and 42 seconds on Pat Griffiths' 1½-litre Lester-MG. Then fortune intervened. On the final lap, the MG's engine seized, handing Moss the win at an average speed of 67mph.

His performance was so dominant that he even lapped Bob Gerard in a sister Frazer Nash, who finished second after losing time avoiding a five-car accident. As Motor Sport magazine observed, it "certainly assisted in elevating the Frazer Nash reputation to a very high pinnacle."

That reputation owed a lot to the marque's remarkable third-place finish at the 1949 24 Hours of Le Mans against more powerful rivals. Named for that victory, 34 Le Mans Replicas were built between 1948-54, powered by a lively 2.0-litre Bristol six-cylinder engine.

This car is one of seven works-prepared Replicas constructed for the 1951 season. It was originally owned by Sidney Greene who, despite losing an arm as a schoolboy, became a prolific competitor in speed trials.

Greene entered the car in the Empire Trophy for Moss's triumphant victory, and retained it through further successes with drivers including Roy Salvadori, Tony Crook and Dick Jacobs. Today, on loan from the Frazer Nash Archives Trust, it remains one of the most celebrated 'Le Mans Reps' of all.

Brief Technical Specification

Engine: six-cylinder, 1971 cc

Top speed: 110-130 mph

Maximum power: 120 bhp

Price when new: £1,263

On display Tuesday 9 June May to Monday 15 June, courtesy of The Frazer Nash Archives.

For more information, please see the cabinet outside the library on the first floor.