

6 NO PROBLEM'

lot of the cars don't have mudguards and how they find their way around without a co-driver I'll never know. But when Allan Staniforth came on the phone I suddenly became a race fan.

Staniforth. It was all his fault. You may recall he wrote a book called 'High Speed, Low Cost' which detailed how he (and everybody else) could build a competitive single seater for peanuts. Terrapins are no longer in the peanuts bracket but they are still cheap forms of motor sport. Good for hill climbs and sprints in this country and in some areas just as good for proper roundy-roundy racing. Over 40 have been constructed so far throughout the world — and around ten of those are in the Caribbean, where they form the backbone of the 1300cc Formula Caribbean class. Hence Staniforth's interest in the West Indies and

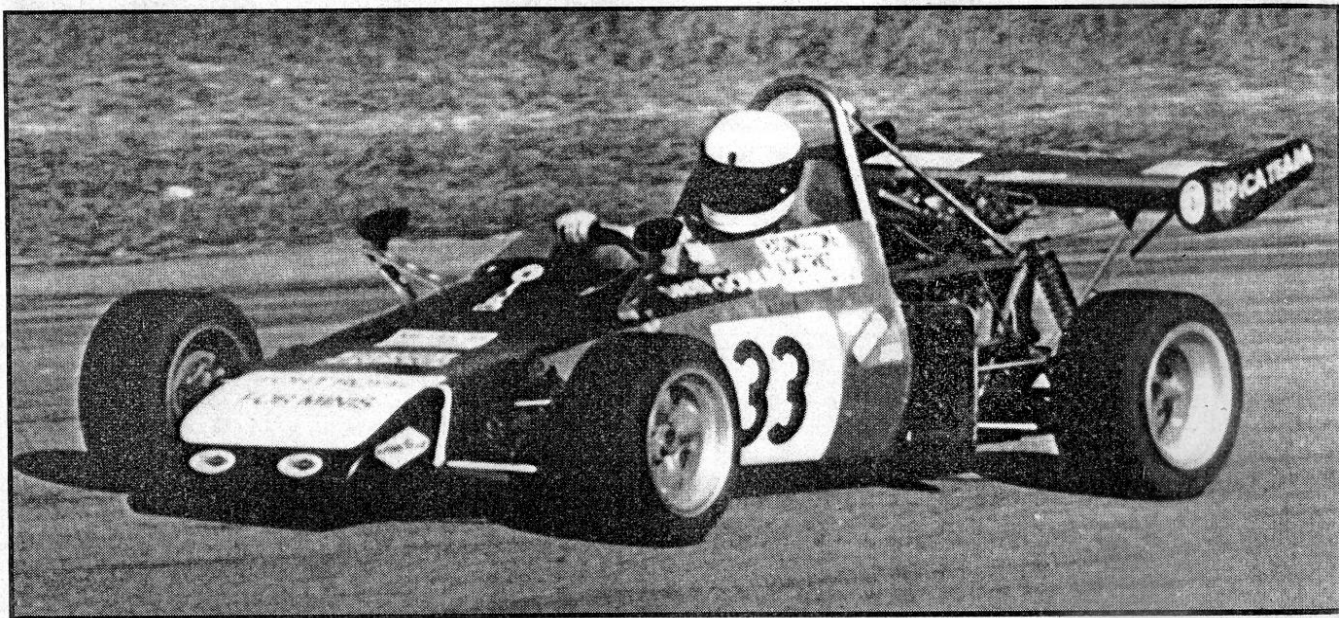
time he took off — Terrapin man, without his Terrapin because he'd just sold it, Graham Ashley-Smith, Goodyear racing tyre sales manager Tony Gilhorne and British Leyland advertising man Alan Moore. And Rosemary Smith who, as well as being the rally driver we all know about, also takes to racing very well and, on this particular occasion, was reading a copy of 'Fiesta' which is best described as a naughty book. Thing was, Rosemary explained, they don't allow naughty books in Ireland and she really should find out what she'd been missing.

The trouble really started when they poured us off the plane at Seawell International Airport, Barbados. First off the heat hit us, bang. Then the local paper took our picture. Then Staniforth and another, early arrived, Terrapin driver David Gould shouted that the cars had got lost in transit. Then we got dragged off to the ICA lounge and met our first rum punch.

Several — no, many — rum punches

Violet keeping in touch by short wave radio, dictating letters, running his companies and organising the Barbados Rally Club. To cap it all Bizzy is the quickest Terrapin driver in the West Indies and laps the 0.8 mile circuit in 44.2 seconds when it's light and 55 seconds when it's dark!

Ralph Johnson is big, looks like he could be a Texan if he were not a Bajan, smiles incessantly and drives a V8 Rover engined Escort that first started life in Britain in the hands of Richard Martin Hurst. John Cole is a quieter character who explains, on the way from the airport to the apartments where we are staying, that he runs his MGB in Bajan Group One because it's a standard production car and has under 100bhp/ton power to weight ratio. Mike Atwell has a garage, drives a Triumph 2.5 PI (or Datsun 240Z) like a bat out of hell on the road and the number two (with Bizzy) Lucas sponsored Terrapin on the track. The meeting I attended was to see Mike take the Barbados



Dave Gould was one of two British Terrapin drivers who took their cars out to the Caribbean to take on the locals — they lost!

why he got invited by the Barbados Rally Club to take two British Terrapins out to have a bash at the locals. All make sense? Oh, yes. Allan Staniforth lives in Leeds.

Dedicated man Staniforth. Took his job as team manager (having sold his own car in the West Indies the previous year) very seriously and left for Barbados a full two weeks before everybody else and three before the meeting. Stout fellow. Even stayed on for a few days after the event to tie up all the loose ends and look after the almost continual social obligations that he would usually describe the morning after as having been 'fatiguing'.

One of the problems about racing in Barbados, Allan explained, was the fact there was only one direct London-Barbados flight (and two return) per week. Which meant, for a Sunday meeting, having to travel out a full week before. Tough that.

Details, I was told, were few. But I did get onto an International Caribbean Airways Boeing 707 at Gatwick knowing I should meet some of the other members of the party. After about two hours flying I located them — by the noise. Terrapin man John Crowson — who hoped his car was safely at the Bridgetown, Barbados, docks by the

later we were hooked. Not just on the rum but by the fact that it was pitch black, seven o'clock at night and still around 70 degrees. In fact it didn't get much colder at any time. You get used to it, rather like the rum. I have a theory about rum and Barbados. Thing is, you drink so much, you sweat so much that it never affects you. Good in theory, and seems to work in practice too.

We met several locals, or Bajans as they are known. Barbados is one of the southernmost islands of the West Indies and the true natives are black, but (as in most places) there are also the settlers, 'Colonials' from way back who are now just as much the natives as anybody else. The majority of the businessmen and motor racing guys come from this section of the community. Ralph 'Bizzy' Williams a leading man in the Barbados Club and one of the people behind the scheme to bring over British competition, is a fairly typical example. He owns the land the Bushy Park Race Circuit is on: originally just a sugar plantation. Bizzy now also has a construction company, electrical contracting company and, recently, he's found oil on his land. He's called Bizzy because he's busy. Up at six, or earlier, each morning, belting around the island in his Datsun

racing championship from Bizzy by one point.

That night the forever working Allan Staniforth admits the two Terrapins have in fact arrived from England and are in crates at Atwell's garage waiting to be unpacked.

From Monday night until Saturday practice cannot be told in full. Triple C has insufficient space for one reason and, for another, there are a number of people who would probably contact their solicitor if I spilled the whole beans. Let it just be said that there were many dramas before the two Terrapins were running properly: John's engine had never turned before it reached the island and David suddenly found his locked solid as two flywheel housing bolts loosened and jammed the flywheel — and that the team manager was not the only person who got overtaken by fatigue on more than one occasion.

All through the week racers were arriving in the island. The Barbados meeting in November is the middle of a three race Caribbean series. Guyana (on the South American mainland) starts it off, then Barbados and then Jamaica. From Guyana came Alec Poole, Gordon Spice and Bob Howlings all waiting anxiously to see if the