

'Spit in the past', by Brian Marshall



My brief courtship with idol worship came to a depressing end the day that Mike Hawthorn died in a stupid 'race you there' car crash on a wet public road in the late 1950's. What a savage waste. But then the list is endless in the years of motor racing's inception even up until recently with Senna's death. Those far off years seemed to have magic, panache. Even a picture of those cars - Connaught - BRM - Mercedes - Maserati - Ferrari - Talbot - Jaguar, evoke the senses. One can almost smell the exhaust, the hot oil, that peculiar smell of fresh paint work enduring under heat. And the men - Straight out of the 'Boys own' magazine, with their leather helmets, goggles and, later, visors, ordinary white overalls for the most part, hands covered in blisters on the occasions when they had battled with brutish weight and steering. Drivers blackened face with fumes, dust and oil leaks. It seems romantic, but with hindsight must have been its own kind of madness at the time.

However, as Bob Hope would say, 'thanks for the memories' - Campbell - Parry Thomas - Nuvolari - Cortese - Ascari - Prince Bira - Hawthorne - Collins - Moss - Salvadori and El Maestro himself Fangio.

These days GP racing resembles giant slot car racing and the cars themselves appear to be over engineered point and squirt machines with the driver just a helmet shaped blob lost amidst the advertising logos. Those days of yore were indeed vintage in every way and to recollect them now is almost like a dream....

Which brings me to the Type 48 Corsa Spyder. Alan has provided me with the answer to many a dream. If you can remember with nostalgia those earlier days then the Type 48 is for you. They have reproduced (in general terms) the appearance of the first road racing Ferrari marque, the 166 Corsa Spyder, and in my opinion, have improved the basic styling.... But judge for yourselves. They have captured the essence of the original Ferrari in every respect, never trying nor claiming it is a copy or a replica. No, this is a dream machine. Check that nobody is looking (shut the workshop door), climb into the cockpit, shuffle your legs down

to the pedals and look down the length of the bonnet..... If that isn't the Mulsanne straight in front of you then you have no soul....Go and buy a Toyota!

Come March I will have spent three years on the project.... Good grief what has he been doing?... Please, in my defence, let me explain. I work six or seven days a week as manager of my son's poultry breeding farm. Very labour intensive and the workload could have you going out of your head! In fact, if I had not started the '48 project, I would probably have walked straight down Skegness beach and out to sea!

The car is being built in the farm workshop so in the summer I spend one or two hours on it most evenings, in the winter, five minutes to nothing! My mechanical experience is really limited to everyday car maintenance, but I have been a plater/welder and have always been a DIY sort of person. That being to my advantage, but on the down side if the instructions are written down I do not try to remember them. So, all my 'mechanicing' comes step by step, hand in hand with the instructions and a Haynes manual. My nearest specialists are as far as twenty-five and up to 40 miles away. Living here near Skegness has its advantages but not as far as motoring facilities are concerned and I have never owned a Spitfire before so in some respects it is a 'strange' car for me to work with. In the main, I have followed the instructions closely for if I sell the car in future I can say that it is as originally designed. That aside East Lincs Motor Sport re-worked my 1300 engine (higher revving than the 1500)...Slightly lightened flywheel...two pounds...too much would upset the engine performance at low revs. We have fitted a Kent fast road cam, shaved the head, had the original carburettors overhauled and added KN filters with ram stubs. Triumph sports stainless exhaust manifold vents through a single expansion box to twin tailpipes. East Linc Motor Sport have guaranteed that it will go like 'spit off a hot shovel!' What more do you want? So, what am I trying to achieve with this car? Will it pass the eye of the chap in the street as a vintage sports racing car, recently overhauled? Will people stop me and ask what it is, (mouth slightly open?)... They will!...Then that'll do for me...Will it you?