

Reconstructing a Legend

by Andrew Komosa >>

This is a much-abbreviated transcript of a talk and slideshow that Andrew gave to the Surrey Area meeting at Silvermere on 12th October 2011.

The GT40 bug hit me about 30 years ago, while reading an old magazine road test, *Autocar* I believe. I can vividly recall being thrilled by a white GT40 being driven at 175 mph on some English dual carriageway in the 1960s and how the test driver sped passed a waiting police car, only laughing to himself how they couldn't ever catch him; how times have changed!



Following a succession of replica GT40s, I realised that nothing but an original would satisfy my craving, so I began looking around for a suitable car. It soon became apparent that even those built using Tennant Panels chassis during the 1990s by Bryan Wingfield, but wearing original GT40 VINs, were not within my reach. One of these cars was offered to me for north of \$3.5 million!

A deal with a fellow Club member sadly fell through, so I was left looking at a possible Mirage Automotive, Gox, Gelscoe or Holman tub. None of these options were really open to me because it looked as if they'd take too long to construct or were outside my budget. I can't recall how I came across Classic Car Developments in New Zealand, but a deal was struck in November 2009. This had the added benefit that they had built a number of tubs for original cars whose chassis were either rusted through or crash damaged. Although I'm not at liberty to reveal which GT40s, my tub does include a number of renovated panels from cars which have undergone restoration.

I am not certain whether this is down to good planning or pure coincidence, but the chassis number of my car is P/1042 and declared on the official records as 'manufactured 1966'. For legal reasons, I must differentiate between my car and GT40 P/1042, although both cars were painted yellow around 2000 and might have some Franco Sbarro connection. I can say nothing more, other than that I can prove provenance dating back to 1994 when P/1042 was imported into the UK.

Interestingly, word on the street reports that GT40 P/1042 was rebuilt following the fire which consumed it back in 1968/69 and ran through various owners, being painted blue, yellow, then more lately

returned to the striking red and white livery of the Scuderia Filipinetti team, taking part in historic races from the early 1990s to the present. One such owner was Jean Blaton, a Belgian racing driver, who owned GT40 P/1042 in the early 1990s and who painted it Belgian racing yellow.

However, I needed a shell in which to clothe my monocoque chassis. Frank Catt of Wealden Engineering said he knew where an original one was for



sale. This was swiftly purchased, and my car was, hence, reconstructed using the fibreglass body of GT40 P/1001, the 1965 New York Motor Salon and World's Fair show car, it being one of the most campaigned GT40s, taking part in no less than 29 races between 1966 and 1969.

In June 1966 the car took part in the 24 Hours of Le Mans, being driven by Jacky Ickx and Jochen Neerpasch. Numbered 60 and resplendent in the white with red and black stripes of the Essex Wire company, it failed to complete the race, but as all GT40 aficionados will recall, Ford GT40s took the most historic of wins that year, placing 1st, 2nd and 3rd overall, in a well documented photo finish.

In August 1966 the car, numbered 109, driven by Alan Rees, failed to finish at Brands Hatch, but managed a creditable 10th place at Zeltweg, driven by Innes Ireland and Mike Spence. However, it failed again to finish its next couple of races at Kyalami,

