



North Kent Lotus Group



October 2009

Dear Enthusiast

I'm trying to beat the postal strike this week, so I hope I've posted this early enough if I haven't - apologies.

Some very welcome articles submitted again this month - so please keep them coming. John H has supplied a write up on what I'm sure will become the motoring event to rival the likes of the Goodwood Breakfast Club or the London to Brighton run - yes it's Harpers Hunt. I couldn't make it but John U and Simon did and they thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Continuing with articles, Howard has taken Lotus to the water!! It sounded a good bit of fun and reminded me of a teenage excursion on the Norfolk Broads in a boat many years ago with a pal who I've since lost touch with - but years later I discovered that Howard had been business partners with him for a while. It's a small world.

There's a nice bit of news to report this month - Terry was approached by a company via the NKLG website who asked if they could place a link on our home page for a payment of £120 for one year. After initial caution we proceeded and a few days later received the money via Paypal. Quite something and thanks must go to Terry for keeping the site fresh and attractive. It's probably a

one off but who knows - you could all be shareholders of a future dotcom sensation!!

The site is tiger.co.uk which is predominately an insurance comparison site but they have many other money saving links. If you take a look, make sure that you go via the NKLG website as they probably have click analysis to see where traffic to the site is coming from. Let me know if you do take up any offers or insurance cover and how much you save - I know I'll be having a look in the near future.

And whilst on the subject, any content you have or comments on what you would like to see on our site would be most welcome - we'd love to see a few more "members cars" entries. Get in touch with Terry if you have anything. Email him at the address above or see him on club night.

Rumours have a nasty habit of often being fact and three which are not good is that the Evora isn't selling and massive discounts of £11k are up for grabs. It makes the price more realistic but profits need to be made. - early delivery cars are being recalled with paint blistering in the hot engine bay and also, whilst not really a factory matter, the Chapman family won't sanction the use of the Lotus logo on the new F1 car. On a much more positive note, it's been awarded "Performance Car of the Year"

in Car magazine beating all the big names.

The Autumn run didn't happen on Sunday but we haven't done too bad this year so one or two things missed is to be expected. John H asked if anybody is interested in the annual London - Brighton commercial vehicle run on Sunday 1st November - give him a ring for further details or if you fancy attending. I like the look of the Lotus day at Brands on the 14th - I'm hoping to fit that in - time has been a bit tight of late - so give me a ring if you're going.

And I can't believe it but the Christmas meal is rapidly approaching so the menu is enclosed. The price is the same as last year and the Bottle House has had a face lift since then. The booking deadline is the the next club night on the 11th November but John would like to get as many bookings as possible before then. The only problem we have is the post strike - the last thing we want is to have stuff stuck in the post so it'll be best to gauge things over the next week or so.

I only gave him a quick mention last month, but it was good to see Mark at the midweek run back in August. We don't see much of him since his move and I must admit I wasn't expecting to see his Boxster in the car park first thing when we arrived. He's getting on ok with the Porsche apart from over zealous main dealers trying to convince him he needed new

brake discs prematurely - they're all looking for business! Anyway seeing him and reading the "Dinner With" regular feature in Motor Sport last month reminded me of our first trip to Le Mans back in 97. The featured celeb was Julian Bailey who drove for Laurence Pearce's Lister Storm team that year (the same year that Lotus entered the GT1 Elise). Mark treated Sue and me to a very nice meal at a swanky restaurant at nearby La Fleche on the Friday "rest day" and low and behold the Lister team was also having lunch. When we'd finished, Mark asked the table if they knew how Lotus had done in practise and the reply? - who's Lotus?

Going back to the postal strike, Neil has asked me to remind you to let him have your email address for our private distribution list so that the newsletter can be sent as a pdf. We'll be sending this month's letter via pdf as well as by post to those on the list just in case.

Well that's about it this month - I'll leave you with a couple of photos that Howard sent of an Eleven. Obviously a road going version and looking in lovely condition. No other info though.

John



SHOCK LOTUS VICTORY IN HARPERS HUNT TROPHY!

It is with a sense of pleasure and surprise that I am able to inform you of another Lotus victory in a major motorsport event!

Sunday 27th September saw the first Harpers Hunt take place around the Sevenoaks area in Kent. What started as a Club Lotus, Lotus-only, North Kent Lotus Group v Sussex Group event, was poorly attended by owners of the marque. Just one Sussex entry, Chris Thorpe and Wife in their M100 Elan, and one representative of NKLG in the shape of Team Underdavies, also in an M100. John Underhay, owner/driver and a regular winner of similar events including two triumphs in the three Komosa Cups run to date, was severely handicapped when he teamed up with Simon Davies Esq., who was expected to compete in his Type 14 Elite but decided not to ruin a beautiful day out by doing so...

Chris, organiser of the earlier-in-the-year Sussex Group hunt, which was won by a Lotus owner (in a Skoda!) and in which I came second (in my Toyota MR2) could only do the first half due to prior commitments. So he wasn't the winner, and Team Underdavies, despite completing the whole event at a sufficiently leisurely pace to ensure victory, only managed 7th place (The Davies Effect!!!) "So who did win?" I hear you cry!

When devising the NKLG Komosa Cup treasure hunt for last year (the responsibility of the winner of the previous outing) I did such a thorough job that they couldn't complete it. Too much to do. We did declare a Winner though. When the list of events for the group arrived in the post in January, I was as surprised as anyone to see "Komosa Cup Part 2 - contact John Harper" scheduled for Sept 27th. Might have asked! But I was delighted at this encouraging endorsement.

I felt the turnout for the Komosa Cup had been a little under-par, and as I have a number of customers who own a variety of "interesting" cars, I asked the NKLG Steering Group if they would object to my inviting a few of these along to make up the numbers. They said "fine". Then I thought "well there wasn't that much left to do from last year, ought to add a bit more to make it all worthwhile".

As I drive round London earning my daily bread, I see a lot of "interesting" cars being driven and also parked up, and I always think it would be great meet the owners and chat about their cars, but the opportunity rarely presents itself. Then I thought "what if I invited them to The Hunt too, so we could meet and have that chat!".

I also asked the Steering Group if, as we had awarded the Komosa Cup to the winner of "the first half" last year, they would have any objection to me conducting "Part 2" under my own title with a new trophy for the winner. They agreed. Harpers Hunt was born. I drew up and printed off an invitation to the event, which I distributed to customers and total strangers alike.

My determination to establish an event to rival The Revival knows no bounds. After distributing around 400 flyer/invitations under the windscreen wipers of cars at the roadside, in traffic

jams, and at various Goodwood events including Breakfast Club meetings, and getting over 300 "hits" on the website as a result, we had a respectable, manageable, and delightfully diverse line-up of participants on the day. Thirteen Teams: Two M100 Elans, Three VW's (a Kharman Ghia Coupe, subtly modified Golf VR6, and a not-so-subtle-souped-up Polo), a Porsche Boxster, a Toyota MR2 Roadster (from my other club -The MR2 Drivers Club. There should have been another, a Mk I, but Team Howard turned up in a Honda CRV as there were three of them and you can't get three in a 2), a Citroen Ami 8 Estate (a rare sight on our roads these days, and the first owner to respond to my leafleting), an Austin Healey 3000, a Ford Mustang GT, and a Renault Megane (unbelievably blinged-up). And an Elan+2. And there you have the winner! An EX Club Lotus member, one of the "roadside recruited" cars. A father and daughter team whose enthusiasm and determination to win put the half a dozen other Lotus owners who said they were coming the night before, then didn't, to shame. Team Croft!



At the team briefing, I warned participants that they should not attempt to answer all the questions and achieve all the challenges. I told them there were simply TOO MANY for any team to complete. I am delighted to say Team Croft proved me wrong.

As mentioned, we lost the Elan of Team Thorpe at the halfway stage due to prior commitments. We also discovered at lunch, held in the grounds of the National Trusts Knole Park, that Team Mitchell in the Healey had given up the ghost at the third clue, finding it impossible to negotiate the route safely and look for clues as he had no navigator/spotter. He will return next year.

In 2nd place, Team Richardson in their beautiful VW Kharman Ghia coupe.

They were only just pipped to the post, leading on clue points (64 v 62 points) but losing out on The Challenges by two (worth 10 points each. Total 100pts)

3rd Team Parfitt in the Boxster (95pts)

4th Team Herbert in the Polo (74pts)

5th Team Ney (Golf 73pts)

6th Team Phillips (MR2 56pts)

7th Team Underdavies (Elan 51pts Bring The Wife next year John!)

8th Team Armstrong (Megane 49pts)

9th Team Redington (Mustang 43pts Followed Team Underdavies round the entire route and STILL scored fewer points than them!)

10th Team Ireneschild (Ami Estate 37pts Only there for the picnic, but one of the fastest drivers of the event - into and out of the car park at the end!)

11th Team Thorpe (Elan 28.5pts) Not bad considering they only did half!

12th Team Howard (Honda CRV 23pts) Arrived last, finished last. He was a good customer of mine...

I could not have put The Hunt on without the help of my son Tom who took care of the tech side of things, putting up and updating the website and sending e-mails, and my wife Andrea for putting her professional skills as a school class-room assistant to good use in marking the answers. I also need to thank them for allowing me the countless hours away from them, planning the route and clues.

Thanks also to Club Lotus for providing a Lotus DVD and Key ring as additional prizes. The DVD went to the highest placed Lotus (the winners) and the Key ring to Team Underdavies for competing and completing. Couldn't send John U home without a prize. Perhaps a year's free membership for next year's winner, Club Lotus???

I sincerely hope the lack of enthusiasm to compete from within the Lotus community will not be evident in the newly revived Team Lotus, and that they possess a greater desire to compete and win. Maybe next year boys and girls? You missed a great event this year!

John Harper

Keeping up with the nautical theme this month, Chris sent me a snap of this cruiser spotted in Greece



TWO MEN IN A BOAT WITH A LOTUS FLAG

Off to Norfolk for a "two men in a boat" break, doing what men do best when they are left alone. This time I wanted to fly the flag for Lotus In Norwich in a light hearted way. We raised the Lotus duster and set off for the city centre.



This was going to take at least two days at an average of four miles an hour, not quite at normal Lotus speeds but there were going to be some advantages. No speed humps, no speed restrictions, no speed cameras, no parking problems, and above all, no drinking restrictions.

At this steady pace it could not have felt less like a Lotus experience but we were on our way and the site of the Lotus Duster was creating a good response from other boating folk. At one stop a couple just had to tell us that they lived down the road from the Factory. You can imagine the relaxed pleasure as we slowly made our way, like explorers towards Norwich, eating, drinking, sleeping and pub stops.

First we had to navigate the choppy waters and currents of the Yarmouth estuary with the bow dipping low enough to allow waves onto the front cabin, I felt like an explorer at that point. My navigator and skipper said he was concerned about the clinker boards hitting the wave trough, but we had no option and pressed on in order to achieve our goal.

Slowly the industrial part of Norwich filled the bank sides and eventually we glided into the centre and moored up. It was a surreal moment for me on a boat with a Lotus flag flying and cars passing by in the street above. Mission accomplished.

On our return trip we spotted one of Colin Chapman's Moonrakers looking very well cared for and every much as modern as newer boats of today.



Many thanks to my skipper and friend Len for a great light hearted bit of fun.

Howard