



North Kent Lotus Group



June 2010

Dear Enthusiast

What a busy month! The Komosa Cup has been and gone; Crystal Palace was a huge success; we're back from Le Mans; production of the Europa is probably coming to an end and a (possibly genuine?) photo of the new Esprit has emerged..... And an even busier few weeks ahead - The Lotus Festival at Snetterton; the Vino Run; the Sundridge Fete and the Barbeque at the White Rock.

Where to begin? Well, Crystal Palace, what a great weekend. I think I'm right in saying that the whole event was a huge success with over 5000 spectators for the two days. John H has supplied a report and apologies to Club Lotus HQ for usurping it. One comment on John's report - I thought that Brooklands was the first purpose built motor racing circuit in the world - I'm sure he'll put me right.

I'll just add it was a pity that we couldn't have had a few more cars on the stand - there was enough room at the park, perhaps next year?



I enjoyed myself but misjudged the sun on my face as usual - and ended up with the consequences. Also, when we arrived I managed to run over a rather large lump of dog poo which was lurking in the grass, this suffused the stand with a rather unwanted pong for the rest of the day. So I ended up with the sun on my face and poo on my tyres, but as Roger quite rightly pointed out - it's better it was that way round.

There were too many photos taken at C.P. to include here so I'll pass them on to Terry to post on the website, so please take a look. Incidentally, the weekend was to help a local charity and NKLG donated £25 to the St Christopher's Hospice. Chris took care of all arrangements so thanks for making it a great day and thanks to John U for lugging all the club regalia etc.

We didn't come last this year but the entry for the Komosa Cup last month was rather thin. Perhaps the forecast of a hot sunny day kept the majority away but John and Joan put together a nicely concise run which suited the weather. Sue and I are not huge lovers of treasure hunts, but this one we enjoyed (it was easier!!). We did stumble at the last furlong though as somebody (not one of our number I hasten to add!) kindly twisted a direction sign at a crossroads and we fell to (navigational) pieces! Simon and Pat deservedly took the honours, so the task to arrange the next one (in two year's time) is in their hands. Incidentally, John and Pam turned up in their brand new Elise. Just two weeks old, it was another of these "we'll just pop into Lipscomb's to have have a look". They were offered a deal they couldn't refuse!



Other new car news; Duncan is awaiting delivery of a Caterham and whilst club night discussion turned to Caterhams, Richard P highly recommended a father and son workshop based in Bexley who have over 50 years Caterham experience between them. They'll take on any work involving performance/road cars, however large or small the task. The website (boss-racing.co.uk) appears to be under construction at the moment but if you Google "Boss Racing Bexley" you'll get full details of where they are.

If you remember, Richard is currently doing some sprints in his R500 in the Tunbridge Wells Motor Club championship and is doing rather well - take a look at twmc.org.uk. He's also doing his annual pilgrimage to the Nurburbring anybody fancy joining him??

This letter will be too late for the Lotus Festival at Snetterton. We didn't have a big response for the free tickets so Ian has probably attached any NKLG participants to the Historic Lotus Club stand which John U was involved in organising. It looked like

it was going to be a great event. I'll be glad of any photos/reports etc though. (Must be one for John H!) as we couldn't make it.

John H was the winner of last month's ad hoc photo competition - he texted the answer within seconds of seeing the picture - old clever-clogs!! See Roger's answer over the page. Roger has also has posted a reminder and requests for Sundridge Fete participants - it's only for the afternoon, so I'm sure we can rustle up a few cars. The Chinese nosh afterwards sounds like a nice idea - so put us down, Roger.

Other events coming up; the Vino Run this coming weekend. Jon and Michelle are arranging this and there's still time to book a place. We're meeting at the Moat at Wrotham Heath at 9.30 for a 10.00 sharp getaway; there's the Barbecue at the White Rock, John and Pauline are selling the tickets; and the Classic Le Mans, which a few of us are going to. If you do fancy a meet-up out at La Sarthe give me a ring or text. Contact details for all of the events are over the page.

Although we missed the club night, my spy tells me that it was it was a busy night - not helped by a pool match in the main bar once again! There were around 23 inside as it was far too cold for a summer's evening in the car park. Four Lotus in attendance - all Elises and they were bolstered by two MX5's, an Eme's Elite and a Caterham. One MX5 was John's (the other H) and he's unfortunately broken his leg, so let's wish him a speedy recovery.

And finally, some Lotus snippets, as I said earlier, it looks as though the Europa production is coming to an end - and that's not surprising. A picture of the new Esprit is over the page (is it the real thing?); a V6 Exige looks to be on the cards and last (and possible least), Top Gear are due to do something rather nasty to a very nice Excel - it'll be a case of watch and weep!

If I don't see you at any of the up and coming events, I'll see you at the next club night which is rather late in the month on the 14th July.

John

Hi John

Now the newsletter is out, all can be revealed!

It is a Caterham 21 - and well done to John H for texting me the correct answer even before I had a chance to read my own newsletter.

The original car was produced for the 1994 British Motor Show to celebrate 21 years of Caterham Cars. Styled by Iain Robertson and developed by a team under Jez Coates, the aim was to have a car that offered "the chance to experience Caterham motoring in a more practical format". The 21 was offered with a range of 4 cylinder engines from 1.6 to 2.0 litres, with 115 to 230 bhp. Caterham originally intended to produce 200 cars per year, but less than 50 were actually made before production ceased. Several variations were created to participate in racing events.

The 21 is essentially the same car as a Caterham 7, sharing almost all major parts. The chassis is stiffer than in a Caterham 7 due to the use of "toblerones" in the driver and passenger door sills and extra strengthening at the front of the car.

The GT editions of the 21 were successfully raced from 1999 to 2001, including one run by GPS Racing winning its class in the Belcar 24 hour race and beating the Lotus Elises in that class.

A single series 2 prototype was created by Caterham, with a view to fitting a "standard" superstructure from an MGF and having enough space for a larger power plant, moving the car into the territory occupied at the time by manufacturers such as TVR. Unlike the original, it received a luke-warm reception and wasn't put into production.

The 48 cars made are now fitted with a range of engines, including some not offered at the point the car was originally released, including various Rover K-Series 1.6 and 1.8 types, Vauxhall 2.0 and Ford Duratec 2.3 RST-V8.

Regards
Roger

Can I put a general appeal for cars for the Sundridge Classic Car Show on Sunday 18th July, which will run from 1pm to 5pm.

The show will be just off the A25 in a field between the traffic lights in Sundridge and what used to be the Lamb pub and the entrance will be clearly marked. However, to ensure that as many of us as possible are positioned together, I suggest we meet at 12.15pm in the car park of the big Grasshopper between Westerham and Limpsfield on the A25 before leaving at 12.30pm and driving in convoy the 5 minute journey to the field.

No problem if anyone wants to drive direct to the field.

The show will run in parallel with Sundridge village fete so there will be an opportunity to try splat the rat, open the box, the tombola and other strange village customs. The car show is a relaxed low key affair with a surprisingly wide variety of cars on show including veterans, vintage Rolls, Bentleys, MGs etc etc, 50s and 60s sports and saloons etc, Americans even more etc etc so it would be good to put on a show for Lotus.

There will plenty of room for a picnic but (or possibly as well) to round off the afternoon, for those of you interested in an informal early evening meal, I'm happy to arrange a large table at the Sundridge House Chinese restaurant at 5.30pm. The Sundridge House used to be the Lamb and is only 100 yards from the show. The old Lamb has a huge car park and will very quiet at that time so we can set up another NKLG display at the Chinese!

Would you please let me know asap if you are interested in:

1. Meeting at the big Grasshopper at 12.15
2. Going to the show (either in the convoy or direct)
3. Joining us for a Chinese afterwards

There will be no restriction on numbers as there is plenty of room. I look forward to being overwhelmed!

A bientot (pardon the lack of accent over the "o") from la belle France!

Roger

The New Esprit?





CRYSTAL PALACE SPRINT 2010

The Sunday and Monday of May bank holiday weekend saw the latest effort by the Sevenoaks & District Motor Club to keep alive the memory and spirit of motorsport at the site of the first purpose built motor racing venue in the world, Crystal Palace Park.

When I moved to the area twenty years ago, I took my two young sons for countless laps of this circuit in our McLaren (the baby buggy, not the car) without being remotely aware of the motorsport connection. Race drivers walk a circuit to get to know it, but it was only years later that I was to realise the footpaths that The wife, the boys and myself were so fond of had once been adored by some of the greatest names in motor racing. The footpaths are an accurate record of the circuit that once was, and are enjoyed by many an unaware pedestrian, as a visit on any summer Sunday will reveal. To see race cars performing on the same stretches of pathway this weekend was a very odd experience, seeing such a familiar place transformed, at the same time so suited to what was taking place and providing once again a truly beautiful setting for such an event. A touch of irony can be felt when you see the current notices prohibiting cyclists and skateboarders from exceeding 5mph in exactly the same place where Jochen Rindt once set the circuit lap record at twenty times that. Not that Jochen was likely to be in comparably close proximity to the general public...



The park is used as a venue for a number of events throughout the year, including a Victorian Day where actors are paid to promenade in period costume to rekindle the atmosphere of the park in that era, music concerts that take place on its relatively recently purpose built open-air stage, and the public firework display on November 5th, all of which are well advertised and promoted on site with large banners hung prominently on the railings that surround the park. By comparison, the casual passer-by would have been totally unaware of this weekend's event, as there was no similar publicity for it, although those with a reasonable sense of smell and even average hearing could have detected the roar of the engines and the smell of the unleaded on the day! A mixed blessing in that any "rabble" that might have turned up for a look and spoilt things didn't, but potential enthusiasts may have missed out on a good event. Those in-the-know enthusiasts' present enjoyed excellent views due to the lack of crowding. As a visitor to the on-site museum dedicated to the park's history, you will again find no mention of the race circuit among the displays detailing, ad nauseam, the night of the Great Fire when the exhibition centre which gave the park its current name burnt down. There was at least some form of official council support for the event in the presence of the local Mayor, who was clearly enjoying himself.



Lotus was well represented among the infinite variety of competitors, the diversity of which would have impressed Charles Darwin. Geoffrey Letts did battle in his 1963 **Lotus Cortina Mk1** though I failed to see any hint of the inside front wheel leaving the tarmac in the corners. Andrew Webber was there in his JPS detailed competition ready **Elan+2** complete with what appeared to one observer to be Ground Effect inducing non standard sills. Roger Hodson travelled up all the way from Newton Abbot in Devon to take part in his 1969 **Baby Elan** (a 26R or were those just look-a-like headlamps?). John Hunt entered his 1959 **SIA Seven**, Christopher Davis was in a **Seven S2**, and son-and-heir Caterhams were having a go, belonging to Chris Alston and Robert Martindale. An **Exige Trifuel** was driven with exuberance and determination by Sam Collins, nearly losing it when the nearside rear went on the grass at the Quaife hairpin, (which the "professional" commentators repeatedly referred to as "Quaff". They did wine on a bit...). Nick Atkins was due to perform in his 1962 **Elite** but I didn't see him on the Sunday I attended, ditto Martin Galpins' **211**. Two other Lotus related cars did appear on the Sunday, and were clearly giving it their best shot judging by the impressive take offs from the start line and the oversteer through the mid-course s-bend, in the shape of a white standard **Tesla** and a trendily matt black Supersport version. No credit in the programme to remind me who was driving these, and although I am sure those commentators gave the drivers a name check on the day, the thing that stuck in my mind was that once again they mispronounced the name, constantly calling the cars "Telsas"! (First electric cars good for a 24 Hour event then? Think Gene Pitney and you might get it).



On The Monday Martyn Ellis was due to go up the hill in his **Talbot Sunbeam Lotus**, but as stated I can't say if he did as I was not there. North Kent Lotus Group member John Potts entertained the crowd hugely with easily the smallest car competing. Not a Lotus sadly, this tiny lawnmower green 1947 Monaco led me to come up with the alternative name "Qualcast Superfast" (again those of a certain age and "in the know/mow" may get my sense of humour, apologies to everyone else!)



Club Lotus was well represented on the Sunday with a display of an Elite, M100 Elan, two S2 Elise's and a Peter Stevens Esprit Turbo from North Kent Lotus Group as well as three cars from the Historic Lotus Club. One horror which caught my eye in the exhibition area was a Westfield covered in JPS livery. I admire the owner's enthusiasm in commemorating the sponsors of "our" team but really do feel there should be a law preventing wanna-be Seven owners hi-jacking our heritage!



If you were not there and want to know more, including info on possible future events at the Palace, have a look at www.sevenoaksmotorclub.com or www.motorsportatthepalace.co.uk or buy the book "Motor Racing at Crystal Palace - London's Own Circuit" by SS Collins, published by Veloce.

John H